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CULTURAL CAPITAL AS ACCESS TO LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE AT DESTINATIONS, AND EFFECT OF CHANGES IN CULTURAL PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY IN SOUTH OMO ZONE, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT The objectives of this paper are to understand the Mursi people's perspectives on the significance of cultural tourism on their livelihood and wellbeing, and identify assets and drivers that determine Mursi engagement in tourism activities. The data for this case study methodology was gathered through in-depth interview, focus group discussion, unstructured interviews, and participator observation. Findings show that the Mursi people at tourist destination have taken opportunity of their cultural identity as an asset to diversify their livelihood. Photo for cash, a transaction of cash for photo taken by tourists, is providing indispensable income to purchase grain in times of poor harvest without having to sell their livestock. Photo for cash also provides women with a source of income. While tourism is considered beneficial by the Mursi people, a benefit valuation exercise reveals that the economic benefits of tourism falls below the local peoples' aspired state of wellbeing. A recent change in cultural practice, girls abandoning lip cutting, causes villages to lose opportunities to tourism-based income. In conclusion, this study shows that cultural tourism provides the Mursi people with a source of income that offsets the effects of poor harvest, however, the amount earned does not meet their aspired state of wellbeing.

Key Words: Tourism; Cultural capital; Livelihood opportunities; Photo for cash; Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia has turned its attention towards its tourism industry as a source for economic development. As a result, new policy and strategic directions have been formulated to indicate the future projection in the sector's development. One major move is the nation's policy direction, the Growth and Transformation Program (GTP II), a second five-year plan (2015–2020) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2016) incorporating culture and tourism as one of its seven economic development sector plans revising GTP I. The primary aim is to contribute to the overall sustainable socio-economic development of the country by creating a coordinated and integrated system and enhancing community participation. Furthermore, an Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (ESTMP) was created to accelerate sustainable development and introduce poverty alleviation mechanisms. Ethiopia aims to become one of Africa's top five destinations by 2020. The plan also indicated that tourism in Ethiopia contributed 4.8% towards the GDP in 2013, and it is expected to grow 4.8% by 2024 (UNECA, 2015).

Ethiopia's new tourism policy directions illustrate the country's vision of the

growth of its culture and tourism sector. However, since the macroeconomics contribution of tourism is often amplified, it is important to look beyond the policies to understand the impact at micro level. That is, examining to what extent its impact reaches out broader than just the economic growth, for people to achieve the 'good life' incorporating social, cultural, political and environmental aspects (Holden et al., 2011; Sharpley & Telfer, 2015; Novelli, 2016).

This research focuses on the experience of one ethnic group in South Omo Zone (SOZ) in Southwestern Ethiopia, one of the most popular cultural tourism destinations in the country. Cultural tourism, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), is defined "tourism where the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experiences and consumes the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a destination" (Richards, 2018: 13). Throsby (2003) terms these cultural attractions as cultural capital or assets. The cultural tourism in SOZ is mostly known for the intangible cultural attractions described by Throsby (2003) as the living cultures, lifestyles, value systems, beliefs, identities and traditions of the local people. In this kind of tourism, the people themselves are center of the tourism attraction, as a result, it draws opposing opinions. Researchers in the area often showed the negative implication of tourism on the local people. Turton (2004) highlights tourist intrusion on local people's lives harboring imbalance of power (citing Sontag, 1979) in relation to photography, tourists and local people. Abbink (2009) also condemns tourism in the area as a continuity of the colonial past, while Tomaselli (2012) criticizes cultural tourism in general of its neglect of the very people that draws the tourists. Proponents on the other side put cultural tourism as a mutually beneficial exercise, where an income gain for local people as well as discovery and inspiration for tourists (Scarles, 2012). In SOZ, local people's income gain from tourist has been reported (Turton, 2004, 2005; Régi, 2012; LaTosky, 2013; Nishizaki, 2019) over the years. However, the effect of income from tourism on local people's livelihood and wellbeing has not particularly been studied.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of this study is to assess local people's perspective on cultural tourism's significance on their livelihood and its effect on their wellbeing. This research will involve empirical data analysis of fist-hand experience of local people. It will also analyze historical accounts and current livelihood situations to identify factors determining livelihood activities in cultural tourism.

RESEARCH AREA AND METHODOLOGY

Mursiland is located in the lower Omo Valley, Sala-Mago *Wereda* (equivalent to district in English), one of six tourist destination within the eight *weredas* of SOZ. According to the latest official census (CSA, 2008a; 2008b), the population of Mursiland is 7,500 within an area of 2,000 km^2. Mursiland is located between

two rivers, the Omo and the Mago. The Mursi depend on two types of cultivation and livestock for their livelihood. The territory ranges between 500–1,000 m above sea level with vegetation cover predominantly of bush belts and wooded grasslands that maintain their livelihood of rain fed cultivation and animal herding.

The research for this paper uses a case study methodology. Two cattle settlements and two corresponding tourist sites were purposefully selected. The sites are located one on the South and another on the North side of the access road running from the Zonal city of Jinka. The access road intersects the Mago National park, towards the Omo River and the Kuraz Sugar Factories. In addition, a nearby tourist site and two more villages (one within the same kebele and another in the north of Mursiland, at Makki), both inaccessible to tourists visit, were also studied. Data was collected through the following methods: one in-depth interview; four focus group discussions (two all women, one all men, and one mixed) following focus group discussion guide in (Nyumba et al., 2018); 39 unstructured ethnographic interviews with individuals (8 men, 31 women with an age groups of ≤19 (12), 20–49 (18) and ≥50 (9)), 30 key informant interviews on tourism within the Zone, and participatory observation. An asset[1] mapping methodology (Lightfoot et al., 2014) and a participatory local wellbeing[2] indicator identification exercise (Camfield et al., 2009), and a valuation of the benefits of tourism (Chambers, 2008) were formulated using the result of the mixed focus-group discussions. The latter provides the locals' perspectives on the benefit of tourism on their livelihood.

Fieldworks were conducted during both dry and wet seasons: August–September in 2017, January–February and August–October in 2018, and February–March and August–September in 2019.

PHOTO FOR CASH: A TOURISM SCENARIO

1. Accounts of Early Visitors to Mursiland

Historical accounts indicate that outside visitors into the region are recorded since the late nineteenth century. Turton (1981; 1988) shows that between 1888–1910 colonial expeditions took place in the name of geographical, military, big game hunting, and triangulation of international borders in Eastern Africa, including in the lower Omo Valley. The same records show that the lower Omo Valley was officially designated as part of Ethiopia in 1909, during the reign of Menelik II. In 1909, C.W. Gwynn's expedition marked the delimitation of the borders. Accessibility into the area was limited, though adventurous tourists began visiting the area.

A senior Mursi elder recalls that the first tourist visited Mursiland 39 years ago, in 1969, through the Omo River. A local elder who has worked in the tourism sector as a local authority also recalls that tourist visit started after the access road to Mago National Park (MNP) was created through a food for work scheme by the local people in 1973, right after the establishment of the MNP. Informants say, the main interest of tourists at the time was the Mursi. A young man, who

started as a guide and who now runs his own travel and tour company in Jinka, said the following about initial interaction between Mursi and tourists:

> ... in 1997, the Mursi were shy. Tourists were *"Dub ida"* ... sudden, unexpected visitors—so they run when they see tourists, whom they call "*haranchi."* In the late 80s, they start interacting and tourist started to give 1 ETB ($0.125) to the Mursi for photo, today they receive 5–10 ETB ($0.180–$0.360).

2. Cultural Identity as a Source of Opportunity for Livelihoods

Many tourists come to Mursiland to see the Lip cuts and lip plates *Dhebi Tungon* (see Fig.1) of local women and girls. At 15-years-old, after their first period, girls cut their lips and gradually insert clay plates of up to 30 cm in diameter. The lip cutting is a Mursi girl's rite of passage into adulthood (Turton, 2004; LaTosky, 2006). It signifies sexual maturity and beauty. It also marks their identity, as it distinguishes them from their neighbors. The individual mark of the lip cutting has become a cultural asset/capital and a source of opportunity for livelihood. As with most tourist destinations in South Omo, tourism in Mursi is limited to a "Photo for Cash" scenario. Tourists pay cash to take photos of lip cut and plated Mursi women. Children and men also participate in the exercise, earning money along the way. In some instances, women earn cash by selling artifacts, such as lip plates and leather capes.

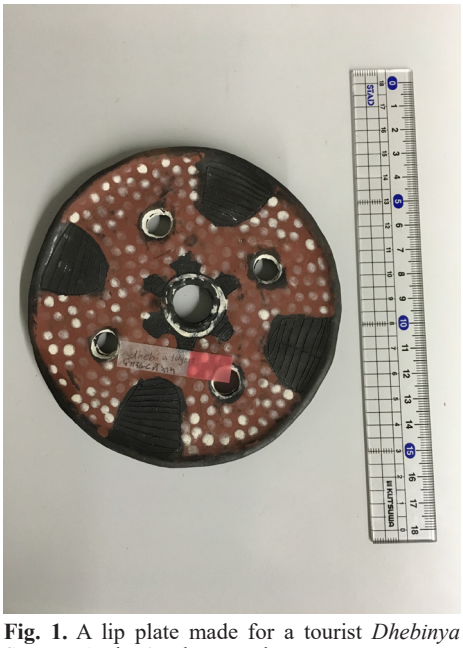

Fig. 1. A lip plate made for a tourist *Dhebinya turusinyawng.* Source: Author's photograph.

Tourist can only enter Mursiland with guides from the zone or *woreda*. Guides are paid 400 ETB ($14). The regional government charge tourist an entrance fee into the MNP, a scout service fee of 435 ETB per person ($16), and car fee of 80 ETB ($3). According to Zonal official's, 60% of income is said to be sent to the *woredas* of all ethnic groups adjacent to the park to fund basic service development. The officials, however, say that these funds are not transferred regularly.

Local villages charge tourists a village entrance fee of 200 ETB ($26) per person. Tourists are then welcome to take photos. Women without lip cuts instead show off their large white wooden ear lobes, and any other objects of adornment. Here is a breakup of average earnings from tourist encounter:

- Photo for cash: 5–10 ETB ($0.18–$0.36)
- Sale of lip plates: 50 ETB ($1.80)
- Sale of leather caps: 7,000 ETB ($251)
- Video footage: 500 ETB ($18.04) (paid to the village)
- Admission to a bloodletting ceremony (A ritual where the Mursi mix a cow's blood with its milk *Ergehola* to drink): 1,000 ETB ($36.08) (paid to the village)

Twelve women day's earning show income range from 0–1,500 ETB with an average earning of 502 ETB ($19). According to an interviewee from the third tourist site, village entrance fees are divided among the households with shares reaching up to 5,000 ETB ($180) a day per person. Mursi people say that they deserve more money for each photo, but they accept what they can get. Some Mursi people are angered by the Photo for cash scheme. They refuse to accept money from tourists because they consider the scheme demeaning. These opinions are few in number and they understand why the majority of their people engage in the activity. When some tourists refrain from taking photos, the Mursi become confused and disappointed. They ask why they are there if they do not want to take photos.

Tourist encounters last anywhere from one hour to one hour and half. Prior to arrival, the Mursi prepare by painting their faces and bodies, and putting on their objects of adornment. Normally, the Mursi do not wear objects on their bodies, except for the women's lip plates and brass bracelets *lalang.* When the women were asked why they wear the objects, one answered, "this is just to attract tourists. Some tourists have asked us to put these objects on when they take photos."

3. Cattle Settlements *Orr*

A cattle settlement, is a homestead where the cattle stay for the night. The Mursi live at the settlements during the months June to September, after the women return from their rain-fed cultivation. Two cattle settlements are the focus of this study. The first cattle settlement (J) is located twenty minutes south of the main access road. It consists of five related households who herd their cattle

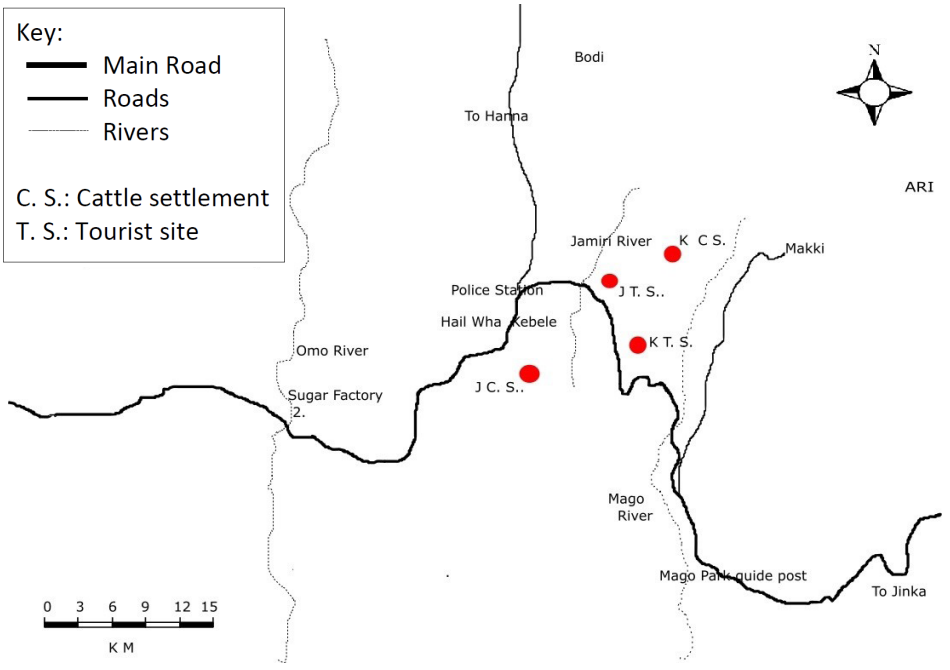

Fig. 2. Map of the research sites in Mursiland.
Source: Author's map, January, 2020.

together. A 'household' refers to any hut with a mother and children. A husband could have multiple wives, and so would live between huts. In J, I stayed with a host and her eight children (six girls and two boys), her step-son, and her co-wife and her two children. J also consisted of my host's brother, his wife, and their two children; the husband's uncle, his wife, and their two children; the husband's aunt and her two children; and my host's second daughter and, her husband and their child. They all moved to the J tourist site to join other groups.

The second cattle settlement (K) is located some thirty minutes north of the main access road (see Fig. 2). It consists of nine households. My host lives in her late father's hut, divorced with her two children. In the settlement also lives her older brother, his first wife and their five children, his second wife and their child, his third wife (his late father's young wife), her four children, and their baby; my host's younger brother, his wife, and their child; my host's younger sister lives nearby with her husband and their child, her father in law with his three wives and children; my host's cousin, his wife, and their two children. They all move to K tourist site which consists of twenty huts from nearby cattle settlements.

After the early morning chores, of milking the cow and feeding the young children, household members from the two cattle settlements move to J and K (see Table 1) (except for new mothers and the sick). The young boys, who are responsible for heading the cattle, sometimes join the encounter. Otherwise, they will make their own show for the tourists on the side of road.

Table 1. Daily household members move to tourist site.

Age range	J Cattle Settlement 5 Households August 2017		K Cattle Settlement 9 Households August 2018	
	F	M	F	M
>30	4	3	5	
19–29	3	1	6	4
15–18	1		1	
15<	6	7	5	6
Total	14	11	17	10

Source: Author's data from fieldwork (J village August 2017) and (K village August 2018).

4. Tourist Sites—*Orr tourisi*

The tourist sites *Orr tourisi* are made close to the roadside. The setup is similar to the hut placements back in the cattle settlements. Contrary to MacCannell's position (1973; 1999) that the tourist sites are distinctly different from the original sites, the two, based upon my observation, were similar. The Mursi carry most belongings back and forth between the two sites. The Mursi embrace a simple lifestyle that enables them to move around easily from one site to another. Table 1 shows all members of households that move to the tourist site on a daily basis.

Once the women arrive at the site, they continue their daily chore until the tourists arrive. They grind grain for the daily meal of porridge *tilla,* preparing *gesso* (local grain-based drink), care for their children, collect firewood, water, fruit, and gather wild leaves from the nearby bush to prepare *knui* as a side dish.

The Mursi are divided into local groups or constituency called *Bhurayoga* that authorize access to pasture and water sources within Mursiland (Turton, 1979; 2004). The groups are divided horizontally from north to south into three big groups: 1) the *Dola* consisting the *Baruba*, *Mogujo* and *Bigolokare*; 2) the *Ariholi*; and 3) the *Gongulobibi*. At the local administrative level, the Mursi are divided into four *kebelle* (the lowest administrative structures) from north to south, *Makki*, *Hailuha (Maganto)*, *Moizo,* and *Bongozo*.

The majority (75%) of Mursi are within the *Dola* groups (Turton, 1995). The access road intersects the northern part of *Dola*, and is the location of most tourist sites. Those groups further away from the access road, *Ariholi* and *Gonglobibi* will travel daily to meet tourists. According to a tourism *wereda* officer in Hanna, the *woreda* administrative town, the Mursi from far-away villages often request the office to facilitate tourist visits closer to their location. However, the limited access to their area hinders tourists from visiting the Mursi in distant locations.

The tourist sites are mostly coordinated by men. Mursi men pass through age grades[3] during the course of their lives. The senior elders *Bari* often observe from afar during tourist visits. The senior boys *Teru* and the junior elders *Rora* coordinate between the Mursi, guides and tourists. In K, one of the three coordinators is a woman. She is well connected in the city of Jinka and also

with some tourists. Their social network or connection is very important in ensuring a good flow of tourist visit, which creates opportunity for livelihood (De Haan & Zoomers, 2005). These days, mobile phones also play a huge role enhancing connections. The guides offer the main access to tourists. They act like brokers between the tourists and the Mursi. As compensation, they require a share of all payments, which makes the Mursi unease. If they do not keep a smooth relationship with the guides, they will lose their source for tourists.

The zone tourist office regulates the guide's work requiring a monthly report on the number of tourist visits and the amount of fees collected. Until recently, the Mursi did not have a direct link to the local authority. However, lately, the Mursi are beginning to confront the local authority directly to make their demands heard.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INCOME FROM TOURISM FOR MURSI LIVELIHOODS

1. Historical Accounts of Livelihood in Mursiland

In a good year the Mursi harvest twice: A flood-retreat cultivation, where preparation starts in August after the small rains *Lour*, and harvested during the dry season in February. The second cultivation is the rain-fed agriculture which start after the big rains in Murch *Issabhai* "the seventh month" (the Ethiopian Calendar start in September). The preparation and cultivation season *Oioyi* is between March and June, and harvest *Telagai* in June–July. The months september to December, and March are the pick months for tourist arrival. After an all time low in May, it slightly picks up from June–August (see Fig. 3).

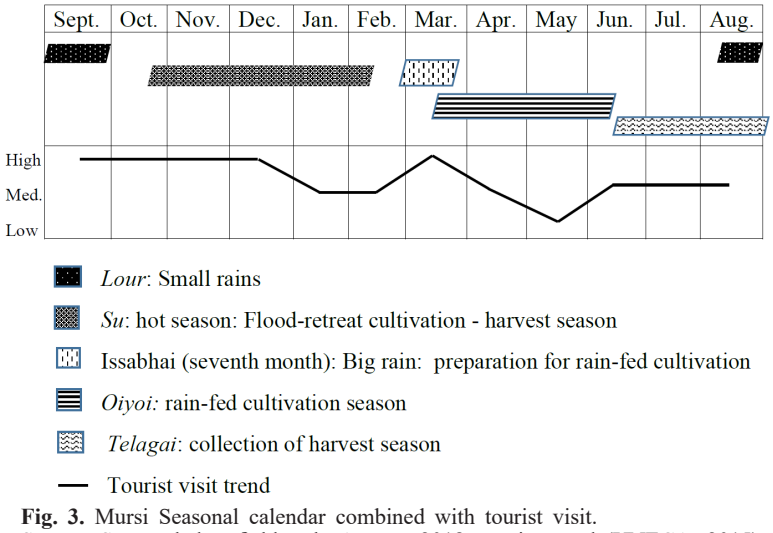

Fig. 3. Mursi Seasonal calendar combined with tourist visit.
Source: Seasonal data fieldwork, August, 2018; tourist trend (UNECA, 2015).

According to Turton (1985; 1988; 1995; 2004; 2005), the two annual harvests provide insufficient amounts of food because rainfall patterns in the region are highly unreliable, with an average of 480 mm of rain a year. Mursi's livestock are a critical source of food, covering one-fourth of their food needs (Turton, 1985). The livestock are also an insurance when harvest is especially poor. This situation has been evident since the early 1970s, when occasional season of hunger turned severe after devastating famines due to series of failed rains for three consecutive years in 1971, 1972, and 1973, and reduced flood on the river beds. After a short improvement of the situation, drought occurred again in 1977, which led for the Mursi to migrate northward in 1979 to the Mago Valley, at the foot of Mt. Mago (1,176 m above sea level), where water is in higher supply (Turton, 1988). The move north has placed some Mursi away from their flood-retreat cultivation on the Omo River, but it has provided a better opportunity for rain-fed cultivation. More so, the move placed them close to a weekly market where Mursi can sell produce and, in bad years, sell cattle for grain. According to Turton (1985; 2005), the move was a defining time in Mursi history. It displays how they naturally respond to serious ecological pressures and exercise their adaptive capacity.

Around the same time, in 1968–1973, the Mursi faced with the shrinking of their grazing and cultivable land. A conservation scheme appropriated and demarcated a total land area of 8,348 km^2 for three Wildlife Protected Areas (WPA), the Omo, the Mago, and the Tama. They are registered as "the Mega Biodiversity Complex" (EWCA, 2011). The scheme's failure to consult the relevant ethnic groups in the area created resentment up until today, depriving the groups of their prime land for their livelihood and social functions (Turton, 2002; 2013; Nishizaki, 2014; Adam & Hutton, 2007; LaTosky, 2013).

Moreover, beginning in 1992, the Mursi livelihood has been disrupted once again by large-scale agricultural schemes, and under the GTP II, implementation of a villagization program (Woldemariam & Gebresenbet, 2014). The economic development plans, while claiming to fully utilize the Omo River and benefit the pastoral communities along the river, it led to further appropriation of land. Around 175,000 ha land has been appropriated for sugar corporations in the area, out of the total 365,000 ha land appropriated at national level (Woldemariam & Gebresenbet, 2014).

The precarious situation in the zone continues today, with research indicating that the adverse impacts of climate change and variability, particularly in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas (Enyew & Hutjis, 2015; Suryabhagavan, 2017) affecting livestock productivity.

2. Livelihood Movements and Tourist Encounters

Women are the lead cultivators with their life in constant seasonal movement in relation to their livelihood patterns. The rain fed cultivation of hoe-farming and shifting cultivation, where they slash and burn a forested area to get fertile soil rather than ploughing, uses minimum tillage of the land for a number of years (2–4) until it is considered infertile. The land then is left to regrow back

to recover its forest cover and fertility. In June–August, after the harvest *telagai,* a time of plenty and social ocasions, they move to their flood-retreat cultivation. After *Luor*, the small rains, cultivation on the silt deposited by the annual flood in the river Elma beds starts in October and harvests in February. They then move back to their rain-fed cultivation in March. During their rain-fed cultivation season, they are closer to their cattle settlements, 1 to 2 hours away by foot. The young boys, *changalay,* remain close to the cattle settlements to look after the cattle within the Elma valley. As Turton (1988) described, during the dry seasons, the cattle remain at the wooded grasslands at the Omo-Mago watershed, which are free from the tsetse fly, and where water is available throughout the dry season.

The *Teru* and *Rora* men move around as necessary to give support to the groups, especially during the clearing of the rain-fed cultivation. Beginning in June when the harvest starts, all the family members move to the cattle settlement and enjoy produce and fresh milk until the next season.

The months of September–December, March, June–August are the tourist seasons. Better July to September the Mursi live at their cattle settlements, close to the tourist sites, working on their harvest and attending tourist encounters. The guides note that they have to remind the Mursi to attend the tourist sites because most of them are busy with their harvest. Since their produce does not last more than two months, and with the next harvest in January or February, it is important to earn money to cover the moths span.

Those from far off also move to the tourist sites during the months of July to November to earn an income. Régi (2014) reports that the Mursi have changed their migration routes as a result of their seasonal tourism movement. Their routes now cut across all sections of territory and through all ”traditional” migration routes within the sections, to acquire income from tourism that he describes as the “new source of wealth.”

3. Livelihood Assets

A focus-group of 11 selected members (6 women and 5 men; with an age range of 2 ≤19, 7 between 20–49, and 2 ≥50) participated in an asset mapping exercise. The result shows, asset described as *Babaga—Shumunug* (Amharic—*ye nuro meseret*), which consist of the Rivers, *Warr* (Omo), *Elma,* Mako *Kidho* (river), the means for their flood-retreat cultivation to produce *liwa,* sorghum, fruits *komkare*, fish *arguli*; roots *keno kirema*; to set up bee-hives *guidoy*; and a place to find different types of wild animals, such as hippopotamus. It is also a place of recreation *sani* and swimming *zami,* watering for their cattle, and where women collect clay *edir* to make pots, and *tsdy* to make ear and lip plates *dhebi a tugon*. The grassland for grazing their animals and the forest *gashi* for rain-fed cultivation *gugna*, to collect honey *retey* and different kinds of medicinal plants like *girari,* African wild olive. They also appreciate the main road access, which the tourists use to get to Mursiland, because it is the only pathway for ambulance services. They note that their livestock is their main source of financial asset during difficult times.

4. Tourist Cash as a Response to Vulnerable Livelihood

Three senior elders, sitting and observing the tourist encounter taking place in K *orr tourisi*, in 2018, give their responses to a question, why is money from tourist important?

> "tourist Challi (tourists are good), tourists bring money to buy maize *kona* and sorghum *doli*, too much rain destroyed our grain, the rain is not good, sometimes too much sometimes too little."

Tourist cash is a new source of income that enables them to purchase grain or flour from the Market. In 2018, I witnessed the members in K tourist site send a total of 4,000 ETB ($144) of the village fee to purchase grain and flour from Jinka.

In time of shortage of grain due to bad harvest the Mursi revealed that they increase collection of wild fruits, leaves, and roots from the nearby bushes. This was also observed during the research duration. Nearly 50 types of leaves, fruits and roots were identified that can be collected and consumed; hunting for wild animals in the forest—usually warthog *hoy*; sharing food—as in Mursi, people share their daily meal with friends and family; and Mursi maize, a drought resistant early maturing grain is planted when rain is short.

Gesso (a grain-based drink) from the bad grain after a bad harvest due to pest or failed rain is consumed and sold to raise cash to purchase good grain. In 2018, two women in K tourist site sold *gesso* worth 1,000 ETB ($34), another woman sold *gesso* worth 4,000 ($144), and sent to Jinka to buy grain and flour. According to their experiences, a 100 kg of grain can sell *gesso* for up to 10,000 ETB ($148). Cash worth $14–$18 can buy 100 kg of maize.

Interview with 39 individuals during tourist encounter revealed that majority of tourist cash is utilized to purchase grain/flour 22 people (59%), followed by medical fees 10 (22%) (Fig. 4). These are 32 people (82%) within the age

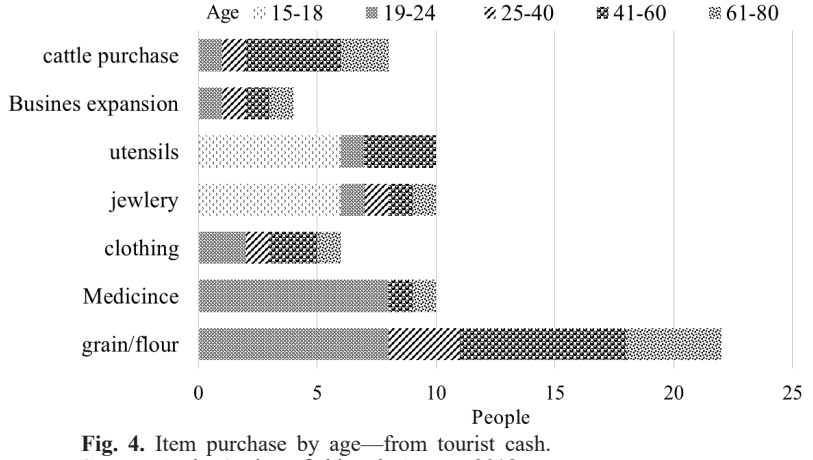

Fig. 4. Item purchase by age—from tourist cash.
Source: Author's data, fieldwork August 2018.

categories 19–80, those that have responsibility to feed a family and children's health to take care. Younger respondents within the age group of 15–18 have the liberty to spend cash other than food. Age categories above 40 also spend money to purchase cattle, probably preparing to secure bride-wealth for their children.

A head of a household in village M, which is not accessible to tourists, complained of grain shortage in August, right after the harvest season, and their worry that they will have to sell their cattle that year, which they hope to avoid.

According to the department head of Early Warning at SOZ in Jinka, Mursiland in Sala-Mago *wereda*, is not normally as food scarce as other areas because of their amount of cattle and grazable land. In their rapid assessment of food insecurity, their primary indicator is quality of grazable land. Their assumption is that if their livestock are in good condition, then so are the people. They would have milk and, in the worst conditions, they can sell their cattle. However, In 2017, according to an interview with the Zonal Officer, there was shortage in the area caused due to failure of the big rain in March, some 14,000 people needed support within the *wereda* because of a Fall Armyworm infestation.[4] In 2018, the number reduced to 8,319, but due to an ongoing drought they predicted a reduction in harvest of 20%–35% from the previous year. Normally, support from the zonal office to *wereda* is a short-term relief than a permanent food security assistance programs.

Contrary to the local authority description of the Mursi food security status, the Mursi assessment is often dire with complaint of recurrent hunger and constant need for extra grain. Sell of livestock is not an easy option. Endashaw et al. (2012) stressed that poor access to livestock markets, as a result of poor access road, leads to high transportation costs. Instead cattle are usually bartered for gain. Fig. 5 shows wildfruits and vegetables gathered from nearby forest.

Fig. 5. Seasonal fruits *Moizoi* from the nearby forest.
Source: Author's photo August, 2018.

The Mursi report on their consistent hunger due to the grain shortage. In 2017, in J village, children had fresh milk and adults had some buttermilk to accompany their *tilla*, but my host was still concerned about an ongoing grain shortage. In 2018, in K village, children did not have fresh milk to drink. They frequently reported of a grain shortage. Records of 15 days on frequency of meal time show where a proper meal of *tilla* and wild vegetables *Knui* was provided once a day. The other times were limited to fruits from the forest.

Tourist money is a way to avoid selling cattle. According to interviews, it is one of the main reasons why the Mursi people pursue tourist cash. Aside from insurance, cattle are a part of their important social and cultural functions, so are valuable asset to safeguard. Most women say their tourist income is used to purchase cattle (goats in these days), if not grain.

Tourist cash also provides a means to finance women's small businesses, such as selling biscuits from town, purchasing *Areke* (grain-based liquor) from town and selling it in Mursi, and selling grain and flour to far off villages.

5. Access to and Control over Cash for Women and New Shift in Behavior

Income from tourists has provided women with opportunity to earn and control their own money. They are able to independently utilize the cash they earn. Women report that their income from tourists allows them to pay for medical needs, start or expand business endeavors, purchase flour to avoid grinding grain, and purchase cattle or goats (see Fig. 4). One mother revealed that with savings of 10,000 ETB ($148) from tourist cash, she managed to buy four calves. Three of the calves contributed for her son's bride-wealth.

A women-only focus group in J cattle settlement agreed upon the following regarding their means of living:

> "… Cattle are our life, if children are sick we make soup, we do not have to go to the hospital. These days there is the clinic, maybe it is better, but we have to pay for the clinic …"

Mursi girls have begun to abandon their customary lip cutting practice, which has begun to alter the tourism dynamics in Mursiland. Out of 95 individuals within a mixed age group, 65% of girls and women did not have cut lips. This increase in the rate of girls with no lip cuts may be the result of a long-run government campaign, beginning in 1987, to abolish harmful traditional practices (LaTosky, 2013). This decline in lip cuts is having an effect in Mursi's pursuit for livelihood. Guides are focusing the flow of tourists to areas where more women have lip cuts. The girl's when asked why they abandoned their lip cutting, they say mainly because it hurts. They know tourist's interest in Mursi is women with cut lips, but they say they now use their big ear lobes and other adornments. This demonstrates the Mursi girl's sense of agency and independence. Their decision to not have their lip has largely been tolerated by the Mursi community, even though it results in financial repercussions.

6. Wellbeing Indicator and Valuing Income from Tourism

During the focus group discussion, an exercise was used to identify indicators of local wellbeing. The participants expressed their wellbeing as *lola* a good life when one is endowed with a certain number of cattle and quintals (100 kgs measurements) of grain harvested from their both cultivation seasons (see Table 2). A person of wellbeing is *Lukuma* or *delleley* or *danka*', which means that one has 3–4 storage huts, 30 quintals of grain, 200 cattle, 120 goats, good health and education, and a number of daughters. According to the focus-group participants, daughters are considered as 'ivory.' They are highly prized because they bring bride-wealth. On the other side, a *Ropga* or bad life means hunger from a lack of grain and milk, sick animals, and sick people. A life of the poor *Peoga* is of the poorest of poor. An orphan, who could not marry because of lack of cattle, or a widow who do not own working tools or utensils *shirko* in the house. Those in the medium category are the *kadgnogi*, hardworking to make life better, with 2 storages, 10 quintals of grain, 150 cattle, 40 goats.

The focus-group participants were also engaged in an exercise to indicate a value of benefit from tourism. Participants reveled a score of 2 within a given value range of 0–10. Still, though they showed a low level of benefit from tourism, the participants insist that income from tourism is critical to survive during crop shortage.

Table 2. Mursi wellbeing indicators.

Wellbeing Category	The person	Household characteristics	Indicators
Lola (good life)	*Lukuma, Delleley, Danka*	Grain	3–4 Storages (30 quintals)
		Cattle	200
		Goats	120
		Daughters	A good number
Kodgnoyi		Grain	2 storages (10 quintals)
		Cattle	150
		Goats	40
Ropga (bad life)	Peoga—poor	Orphans (can not marry)	
		Cattle	Non
		Konchera Working tools	Non
		Shirko—Utinsils	Non

Source: Author's compilation from FGD, February 2019.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The Mursi people were never prepared for the flow of tourism in their area. They turned an inevitable global phenomenon, stemming from the colonial era, into an opportunity. Tourism opens many contentious issues, such as a nuisance in the area, a modern-day colonialism, or the trade as mutually beneficial to all involved. For the Mursi people at destination, tourism is an opportunity to leverage their cultural assets. It does not require extra investment, but synchronizing their livelihood-based movements to make extra income. Their livelihood pattern has been continuously challenged over the years, but their movement has always been a means to look for opportunity to survive.

The Mursi are not new to commercialization. They have been fairly integrated in the market system through livestock and grain exchanges. This has enabled them to remain resilient in the face of vulnerability. Tourism has created a new source of income and a way to manage consumption during times of crop failure, as their coping strategy (Davis, 1996; Ellis, 2000). It has also become a long-term adaptive strategy to build asset for future crises. Moreover, cash from tourists has provided women with an income they can control and put towards their own small business. Still, the extent of income earned from tourism is not completely reliable, as noted by the Mursi themselves. It alone is not enough to completely buffer all future disasters. As Ellis (2000) states, a strategy can be considered a negative adaptation if it fails to increase security. Their benefit from the tourism sector is one of a chance and necessity, but it is also determined by power relations. The new shift in cultural behavior, Mursi girls abandoning lip cutting, is threatning their fragile livelihood once again, as guides avoid tourist sites that have no women or girls with lip cuts. In conclusion, local people in Mursi show that cash from tourism creates opportunity to address their vulnerable livelihood, and it has created a new means to raise income, as well as empowering women. However, the benefit is not comparable to their desired level of wellbeing. Their pursuit for livelihood is further threatened as their traditions evolve. National tourism endeavors currently lack the mechanisms to address the urgent needs of the local people: the major stakeholders of the sector.

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NOTES

(1) Asset, according to Ellis (2000: 31) are described “as stocks of capital that can be utilized directly and indirectly to generate the means of survival to the household.” In this research assets are described according to the local understanding. As such, assets are

stocks that enable a livelihood. Assets were identified in a participatory manner during the focus-group discussion with local Mursi people.

(2) Wellbeing lacks a straightforward definition. Researchers often use wellbeing and qulity of life (QOL) interchangeably (Dodge et al., 2012; Uysal et al., 2016). Therefore, in this work, wellbeing refers to QOL by the World Health Organization (WHOQOL, 1998: 551): "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns."

(3) The Mursi pass through a number of age grades during the course of their lives (Turton, 1978). Children until their teen age years belong to the age grades of *dhongai* and *changalay* until their teenage years. During *dhongai* and *changalay*, their role is to herd cattle. After these stages, they enter *teru* until they marry. Otherewise, *teru* lives together in cattle camps where they take care of their animals and court unmarried girls (Régi, 2014). Once married, they enter *rora* age group. The role of the *rora* is similar to the police. They ensure the safety of people and herds. They ensure smooth internal community relations. After roar is *bara,* junior elders.

(4) Fall Armyworm (FAW—*Spodoptera Frugiperda*) has been a problem in Africa, especially in Ethiopia (within the regions of Amhara, Tigray, Gambelia, Oromia and SNNPs) since 2016. It is still a problem today (Assefa & Ayalew, 2019).

(5) Coping and adaptation strategies: coping is a short-term response to unplanned crisis, and when the coping strategy continues to be a long-term activity, it becomes an adaptation strategy where households respond over the long term to adverse events, cycles and trends (Davis, 1996).

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